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ABSTRACT

Personal satisfaction or enjoyment can be obtained from participation in the persuasive or informative processes of public discourse, partially because both are serious methods of attaining socially useful goals. The public speaker is challenged by the opportunity to raise his audience's level of information about a subject and to influence their judgment or action concerning a proposition. He realizes that there are principles of rhetoric and methods of communication at his disposal, including analysis and invention, arrangement, style, and delivery. The public speaker is faced with various challenges, depending on the rhetorical situation. Examples of situations include narration of facts or events, exposition of a concrete or tangible subject, exposition of an abstract or intangible subject, exposition of a decision or recommendation, and advocacy of personal beliefs. (The author cites examples of personal experiences in several of the situations, discussing two in detail.) (RN)

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SOME SATISFACTIONS DERIVED FROM PUBLIC SPEAKING

Kenneth G. Hance

Because the term "personal enjoyment," which constitutes a portion of the announced title of this paper, may be somewhat misleading and/or may connote what Plato suggested as the goal of "Sophistic Rhetoric," may connote "a plaything", or may suggest that the rhetorical process may be an end in itself, I shall begin by presenting a context for this discussion. Dr. Veldt and I have agreed that this analysis shall be conducted with the premise that "personal enjoyment" shall mean, in effect, "personal satisfaction" with regard to a process which is serious business, which is a means to an end, and which is related to the accomplishment of a socially useful goal. We are, then, talking about "satisfactions" pertaining to a process that is worthy of the best that is associated with a Good Rhetoric.

My purposes in this paper shall be (1) to indicate certain factors which are relevant, I believe, to the Concept of Satisfaction, and (2) to indicate within the context of these factors some "satisfactions" which have been derived from selected case studies taken from "real life."

(1) Some Factors Relevant to the Concept of Satisfaction

For me, at least, the following five factors are peculiarly relevant to the Concept of Satisfaction with reference to the rhetorical process:

1) The realization of the fact that one is faced and challenged by an important job to be done in the realm of (a) Raising the level of information or knowledge concerning a subject, and (b) influencing judgment and/or action concerning a proposition or conviction.
2) The realization of the fact that Rhetoric has a role at this point -- that the process of Communication can be brought to bear to meet the needs implied in (a) and (b) above.

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3) The realization of the fact that there is a body of principles and methods available to "do the job" indicated in (a) and (b) above -- a body which is the product of empirical research, experimental research, personal experience, and theorizing which is "ours for the asking":

a) With regard to the constituent of Invention, a body of principles and methods assisting in:

(1) Making a thorough analysis of the audience and the occasion.

(2) Making a clear determination of one's purpose in a specimen of communication.

(3) Making a thorough analysis of the subject in terms of its nature and of the basic purpose of the "rhetorical effort."

(4) Making decisions regarding the scope of development in terms of time or space limits available and of the audience's knowledge of the subject. (This is important irrespective of the primary purpose: "to inform" or "to convince.")

(5) Securing and using the best elements of development in terms of both the subject and the audience -- "logical" and "psychological" factors.

b) With regard to the constituent of Arrangement, a body of principles and methods assisting in:

(1) Selecting and using the most appropriate over-all pattern of arrangement (Speech Plan).

(2) Selecting and using the most appropriate internal elements of arrangement to secure clarity, coherence, and emphasis.

(3) Selecting and using the most appropriate elements and procedures pertaining to the Introduction, the Body, and the Conclusion.

c) With regard to the constituent of Style, a body of principles and methods assisting in:

(1) Selecting and using the most appropriate language in terms of both my understanding and my listeners' understanding of "what I am trying to say." (Clarity)

(2) Selecting and using the most appropriate means of securing emphasis and variety in language.

d) With respect to the constituent of Delivery, a body of principles and methods assisting in:

(1) Selecting and using the most appropriate elements with respect to the basic mode of Delivery: extempore with notes, extempore without notes, manuscript, etc.

(2) Selecting and using the most appropriate degree of formality and informality in terms of the variables in the occasion, the physical situation, etc.

e) With respect to Auxiliary Considerations, a body of principles and methods assisting in:

(1) Selecting and using the most appropriate visual aids in both oral and written communication.

(2) Selecting and using the most appropriate typographical aids in written communication -- both the non-oral medium and the manuscript version of the oral medium.

4) The realization of the fact that there is (can be) a close correspondence between the principles and methods, on the one hand, and the finished product, on the other.

5) Perhaps, as well, the realization of the fact that "results" anticipated by the speaker can be (have been) achieved in a particular specimen of rhetorical effort.

In my judgment, "Satisfaction" is derived from the realization of the meaning and truth of these five propositions and, perhaps more important, from the realization that these five factors have been brought to bear in a given situation to the best of one's ability -- also, that this process has represented desirable outcomes

(2) Some Satisfactions Which Have Been Derived From Specific Cases

If time permitted, we might well consider the rhetorical challenges which reside in at least six Public Speaking situations and, also, those which result from the successful meeting of these challenges. We could consider four in the "Informative Area": (a) Narration; (b) Pure Exposition: a Concrete and Tangible

Subject; (c) Pure Exposition: an Abstract, Intangible Subject; (d) Exposition of a Decision or a Recommendation. Also, at least two in the area of Discourse of Advocacy: (a) A Point of View Advocated by "This Advocate" and (b) A Point of View Advocated by Another Person or Persons.

While, perhaps, it would be more appropriate to analyze the subject in terms of known and renowned speakers who have used Public Speaking in the service of the Public Good, I have been asked "to speak for myself." Hence, the autobiographical approach which will be used here.

I wish that I could share with you the circumstances regarding, and the satisfactions derived from, not one but several vital and real-life Public Speaking situations not related to Speech Education per se of which I was a part while engaged in Speech teaching (Church work, Business and Industry, etc., as well as those of which I have been a part since retiring from the Speech field and returning to my Alma Mater to assist in Administration). Because of time limitations, however, I can merely allude to certain challenging situations where "the chips were down" concerning the need for INFORMING PERSONS and/or for SETTING FORTH A PROGRAM OF ADVOCACY AND SEEKING AGREEMENT OR FAVORABLE ACTION, then analyze two situations in greater detail.

A SITUATION INVOLVING NARRATION. Here the rhetorical problem consisted of presenting a meaningful chronological-interpretative-evaluative message regarding "The History and Role of Olivet College" to several audiences of adults (principally in Congregational churches in Michigan) that, in many instances:

Have little knowledge of the subject;
Have consequent apathy toward the subject;
Even may question the wisdom of maintaining interest in, and
and supporting, the College.

Almost needless to say, the rhetorical challenges were great; but even greater were the challenges to "do a good job for my Alma Mater." It was, indeed, satisfying to attempt to meet these dual challenges; also, certain satisfactions accrued from what other persons said appeared to be a successful meeting of these challenges.

A SITUATION INVOLVING PURE EXPOSITION: A CONCRETE, TANGIBLE SUBJECT. Here the rhetorical process consisted of presenting a meaningful exposition of a new College building (The million-dollar Margaret Upton Conservatory of Music) to several audiences that:

Have no knowledge of the subject;
Have little appreciation for the size of the gift;
Have little appreciation for the necessary attributes of a Music Building.

Here, too, it was satisfying to attempt to meet the dual challenges and to realize that the mission was accomplished, at least as measured by explicit and implicit responses.

A SITUATION INVOLVING PURE EXPOSITION: AN ABSTRACT, INTANGIBLE SUBJECT. Here the rhetorical process consisted of presenting a meaningful exposition of a new concept-program in the Olivet College curriculum (The Professional Semester) to several audiences consisting of accrediting agency review teams, other educators, and alumni. In general, they had:

No knowledge of the subject (a somewhat novel concept-program);
No direct frame of reference;
Perhaps, some knowledge of analogies: Education Professional Semester (Student Teaching), Internships, etc.

Here, too, it was satisfying to attempt to meet the dual challenges and to realize that the mission was accomplished, at least as measured by responses.

A PROPOSAL REGARDING A POINT OF VIEW ADVOCATED BY "THIS ADVOCATE." Here the rhetorical process consisted of presenting a meaningful, logical "case" concerning a new policy in the area of Community College-Olivet College Relationships with especial reference to the meeting of Basic, All-College Requirements. The first audience was the College Academic Committee; and later, the entire College Faculty, where the message was presented on behalf of the Academic Committee, which had acted favorably concerning the point of view. In general, these audiences had:

Little knowledge of the proposal;
Possible doubt concerning the <u>need</u> for this proposal;
Probable doubts concerning the wisdom of this proposal, especially in terms of a fear of "lowering standards."

Here, too, it was satisfying to attempt to meet the dual challenges and to realize that the mission was accomplished, at least as measured by a unanimous vote of approval by both the Academic Committee and the Faculty as a whole.

Now to turn to two rhetorical situations which we shall analyze in somewhat greater detail in order to indicate the subject-matter challenge and the rhetorical challenge. These have been selected from among scores of others because here the "rhetorical effort" was deemed to be uniquely imperative; where it appeared that the rhetorical judgments had some validity; and where certain tangible, favorable results were achieved.

A SITUATION AT FIRST METHODIST CHURCH, EVANSTON, ILLINOIS. (A situation in the area of Advocacy consisting of the presentation of a decision or recomendation by a committee to a larger group.)

In many respects, this situation presented to me some of the greatest challenges that I have encountered -- subject-matter challenges which were related to the welfare of a large church, which were associated with extensive lack of knowledge of both the subject and a committee's procedures and thinking, and which touched deep-seated factors of sentiment, tradition, welfare of groups within the church, resistance to change, and,-- at the same time -- a sense of irritation at the status quo. Also, rhetorical challenges related to audience analysis, the best means of making the committee's "thinking" and its recommendation clear, and the best means of trying to be persuasive with a minimum of built-in friction and resistance.

What Was the Situation, and What Transpired?

(1) A felt need on the part of almost all members of a large church -- a need regarding the relocation of the Church Office.

(2) The realization of this need by the Official Board followed by the delegation to a special committee of the task of studying the problem and of recommending a solution to this Board.

(3) The lengthy study of this problem by the committee (of which I was the Secretary) -- a procedure of study which implemented every aspect of "The Dewey Pattern of Reflective Thinking."

(4) The understanding by some members of the Church (based upon hearsay remarks) that certain recommendations that were quite unpopular to them would be presented; and the consequent reaction containing "some fire," anxious and even "hot retorts," and advance rebuttals.

(5) The realization by this committee that, aside from the circumstances just named, its recommendation would not be too popular with Sunday School officers and others because of seeming encroachment on their space.

(6) The decision by the committee to request me to prepare a message to be presented both in writing and orally to the Official Board.

(7) My decision to use the "denotative, empirical method of reporting" for maximum clarity in exposition and, hopefully, for maximum impact in terms of advocacy. (This decision took into consideration the generally-accepted values of this method.)

(8) My analysis of the situation (audience, etc.), my recognition of the rhetorical principles and methods involved in the preparation of the message which was to be presented to the Official Board as a "public speech," and the implementation of these principles and methods.

Analysis of the Audience:

Approximately 75 persons; age range -- 20-75
Almost unanimous recognition of the problem
Variety of leadership positions in the Church
Some deep-seated convictions:
Sunday School space should not be usurped;
The Chapel should not be "desecrated";
The Office should be "business-like" at all costs;
The decision should not be "foisted" by a few persons.

Method:

The Denotative, Empirical (Inductive) as being preferable to the traditional Didactic, which comprises: thesis, problem, solution, merits of solution

(9) The presentation of the message.

(10) The responses to the rhetorical effort:

Regarding the Substance:

One question seeking clarification
One question concerning the re-ordering of criteria (not those of high priority)
Three statements of approval concerning the thesis
No statements of opposition to the thesis
Unanimous vote of approval

Regarding the Method:

"Thanks" for the complete coverage
Two comments regarding "frankness" -- exposure of both the "plus" and the "minus" features of the recommendation
Two comments concerning the "favorable ethos" of the committee suggested by this method

What Were (Are) the Satisfactions to Me?

(1) Satisfaction that a significant problem in the life of a Church was solved.

(2) Satisfaction that this solution was achieved by rhetorical means other than an order or an edict.

(3) Satisfaction that this result was achieved without rancor -- even that it served to reduce rancor already existing.

(4) Satisfaction that a body of rhetorical principles and methods has validity and usefulness in "real-life situations."

A SITUATION AT A CHURCH IN DETROIT, MICHIGAN. (A situation in the area of Advocacy consisting of the presentation of a point of view.)

What Was the Situation, and What Transpired?

(1) The invitation by the Senior Minister of one of the largest churches in the city to speak (preach) at each of the two morning worship services. The invitation included the following guide-lines: (a) Do not speak specifically, if at all, about Olivet College, because the President of the College had somewhat recently done so at a large meeting of the membership; (b) Speak upon a topic other than merely a "current issue per se"; (c) Create a message which will harmonize fully with all of the elements of a worship service with several liturgical features and in a beautiful sanctuary.

(2) My decision to speak as a layman (which I am) but, if possible, in the mood of "preaching," with a text, with appropriate Biblical materials, and with a purpose peculiarly related to the life and work of the Church. My decision, also, to emphasize the layman-to-layman feature of the speaker-audience relationship, and, in addition, to emphasize the relevance of this message not only in terms of this morning's worship service but also in terms of the Annual Congregational Meeting, which was scheduled for the next evening (Monday evening).

(3) My decision to use the topic "What is Expected of Us?" or "The Nature of the Company of the Committed" (to borrow a phrase from Elton Trueblood).

(4) My analysis of the Occasion and the Audience:
A worship service with liturgical elements (as noted above), one hour in length.
A congregation with a wide range of ages: 20 to 70 or more and with men and women in a 50%-50% ratio.
A congregation normally anticipating a clergyman in the pulpit except on a special Sunday when one of its members would deliver the message.
A congregation probably apprehensive about the ability of a layman to present a message suitable for a worship service.
A congregation which would almost certainly resent the presentation of a message on a "purely secular theme."

(5) My decision to use a portion of Paul's Letter to the Philippians as the Scripture Reading and as the basis for the message. My decision, further, not to present a mere explication or "lining-out" of this Letter but to use it as the context for a four-point answer to the question "What is Expected of Us": (a) We are to be Studying Persons; (b) We are to be Worshipping Persons; (c) We are to be Participating Persons; (d) We are to be Witnessing Persons.

(6) The preparation and the presentation of this message at the two worship services.

(7) The responses to the rhetorical effort:

Regarding the Substance:

In addition to the somewhat customary expressions of "thanks" for the message, several thoughtful, discerning comments and questions presented in a subsequent get-together.

Some comments regarding the appropriateness of the message. (A highly subjective, it is true, but quite clear "feeling" that the subject-matter was appropriate and well received.)

Regarding the Method

A discerning, written comment by the Senior Minister which said, in essence, that the "approach" and the "method" were of a high order. (Even though factors of politeness and a degree of friendship might have influenced this critique, I am conscious of the fact that such a comment was not required.)

What Were (Are) the Satisfactions to Me?

(1) Satisfaction that a presumed contribution to the life and work of a large Church had been made.

(2) Satisfaction that this contribution could be made via the use of rhetorical principles and methods.

(3) Satisfaction that a body of rhetorical principles and methods has validity and usefulness in "real-life situations."

In the light of the analyses just made, "where are we" -- what "point" or "points" appear to be significant? Evidently, a number of "satisfactions" have been derived from these experiences with Public Speaking or the Rhetorical

Process. More specifically, the following five "satisfactions," which are substantially related to the factors considered at the outset of this paper -- "satisfactions" which I cherish not only because there have been opportunities to attempt to "do good" but, more importantly here, because there have been opportunities to achieve this goal through the medium of our discipline.

(1) I found satisfaction in the challenge of facing, or being asked to face, a socially important task in the realm of Speaking to Inform or of Speaking to Advocate.

(2) I found satisfaction in the realization of the fact that Rhetoric has a role at this point -- that the process of Communication <u>can</u> be brought to bear.

(3) I found satisfaction in the realization of the fact that there <u>is</u> a body of principles and methods available to "do the job" demanded by the nature of the tasks in Speaking to Inform and in Speaking to Advocate.

(4) I found satisfaction in the realization of the fact that there is a close correspondence between the principles and methods, on the one hand, and the finished product, on the other.

(5) Finally, I found satisfaction in the realization of the fact that, as has been repeatedly affirmed, "a proper use of method" will do much to assure -- other factors being equal -- at least an approximation of the desired outcome or result.

In truth, we Speech Educators are associated with a discipline which has much to offer in the name of the Public Good.